

## **Obama's African Roots on Center Stage at Pan-Africa Inaugural Ball**

*Sarah Obama, Robert De Niro, Rev. Desmond Tutu to Help Boost Africa's New  
Special Relationship*

Much was made during the campaign about President Barack Obama's African heritage. His roots will be definitely showing at the pan-Africa ball, where African political leaders, NGOs, and activists will be turning up en masse to show their support for America's first African-American President, and to symbolize the special new relationship the continent shares with America. Among the special guests who will welcome the new President: the President-elect's Kenyan Grandmother **Sarah Obama**, actor **Robert DeNiro**, Nobel Peace Prize winners **Reverend Desmond Tutu** and **Wangari Maathai**.

"This election was about change, and we hope this includes a change in how the world sees Africa," said Libya's **Hassan Tatanaki**, Chairman of the Tatanaki Foundation and one of the event's sponsors. "Africa is more than famine and poverty and war. It is a place of beauty and history and culture as well. We are grateful for the humanitarian commitment of previous Presidents to Africa, but we feel Africa now has a personal connection to America, at the highest level."

*To secure interviews, exclusive photos and b-roll, please contact Ethan Wagner:  
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**WHAT:** "Africa on the Potomac," the 2009 Pan-Africa  
Inaugural Ball

**WHERE:** 1700 Jefferson Davis

**WHEN:** 6:00pm, Tuesday, January 20, 2009 (Inauguration Day)

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## Facts About Azhari

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Description:	First non-governmental Azhar satellite channel. Dedicated to promoting moderate basis of Islam through entertainment and public affairs programming.
On Air Launch Date:	First Day of the Holy Month of Ramadan, Hijri 1430
Format:	24 hour live and recorded programming
Chairman of the Board:	Sheikh Khaled El Guindy
CEO of the Channel And Director of Programming:	Salem Abdel Galil, Former Deputy Minister of Endowments and Al Azhar Scholar
Languages:	Arabic content (75%) English and French content (25%) Hindi and Turkish in 2010.
Satellite Coordinates:	NileSat and ArabSat
Geographic Reach:	Worldwide
Holding Company:	Gesour Media Production
Legal Registration:	British Virgin Islands
Seed Funding Donor:	Hassan Tatanaki, Businessman and Philanthropist
Seed Capital:	5 Million Egyptian Pounds
Azhari Media:	Plans to extend to Azhari newspaper and Azhari radio station in the near future
Live Streaming:	<a href="http://www.azhari.tv">www.azhari.tv</a>

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## About Al Azhari

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### Azhari Satellite Channel

The Azhari is a new satellite channel that follows the Al Azhar doctrine, which adheres to the moderate, tolerant roots of Islam. The channel promotes the timeless, scientific authenticity of Al Azhar in a new multimedia format. The channel is supported by a group of philanthropists and supporters of Al-Azhari. The channel's Board of Directors is headed by Sheikh Khaled Al-Guindy, the renowned Azhar scholar and member of the Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs.

### Azhari Vision

Activate the call to God by preaching the Al Azhar doctrine to global audiences through modern media tools.

### Azhari Mission

Legitimacy comes from Islam and Al Azhar is the solution.

### Azhari Goals

- Activating the unique role of Al-Azhar and its clerics in leading the call to God.
- Highlighting and presenting the skilled preachers of Al-Azhar.
- Providing a legitimate scientific moderate reference for the nation.
- Addressing the extremist trends through intellectual preaching approaches.
- Highlighting the deep history of Al-Azhar with advanced methods of preaching.
- Working to control and unify Fatwas and references.
- Adopting innovative measures in Islamic thought and preaching.

### Al Azhari Methodology

The channel adopts the following media policy and preaching methodology:

- The channel and the Azhar experts refrain from getting involved in government policy.
- The channel and the Azhar experts refraining from attacking individuals and institutions.
- The channel and the Azhar experts aim to extend the dialogue with offenders in accordance with legitimate regulations.
- The channel and the Azhar experts aim to communicate with Al-Azhar scholars and graduates all over the world.

### Al Azhari Requirements

- All Scholars involved in the Channel must be Al Azhar scientists and academics.
- The Channel does not call for people to join Islam; it is aimed at serving as a powerful resource for every member of the Muslim family.

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## How Azhari was Conceived or The Azhari Story

Sheikh Khaled Al-Guindy, the Azhari founder, professes that there are five important factors that influence us as individuals - family, faith, education, friends and the media.

With the explosion of 24 news channels, the Internet, blogs and mobile communications, it is more important and challenging for Al Azhar scholars to deliver their message. All the media tools available to Muslims today, including satellite television, must be brought to bear.

There are an abundance of religious satellite channels in the media sphere representing various schools of thoughts and ideology. Many of these channels advocate a political role for Islam and disseminate false information and perceptions about Islam. Many of these programs criticize the Al Azhar, the true authority of Islam.

Understanding the media reality and the presence of misinformation, the founder of Azhari believed he had a duty to take action.

The Azhari founder determined it was important to be where the followers are, especially given the opportunity to educate the booming youth population in the Middle East, where more than 50% of the population is under the age of 25.

El Guindy felt it was imperative to ensure the information consumers are getting is authentic and comes from the leading authority on Islam, Al Azhar.

The Azhari plans to continue its work through the launch of a newspaper, a blog and to communicate through mobile communications.

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## Days Before Obama's Egypt Visit, A New Call to (Moderate) Prayer

### *"The Azhari" Takes the Tolerant Roots of Islam to a New, Plugged-in Audience*

Cairo, Egypt, 1 June 2009: Calling the distortion of Islam into a violent, intolerant force the "central challenge facing the youth of the Arab and Muslim world", a group of prominent Muslim clerics associated with Al Azhar University—Islam's oldest and most credible religious teaching institution—is launching a 24 hour entertainment and education television channel as part of multimedia effort to promote moderate Islam.

Known as The Azhari, the satellite channel is expected to launch during Ramadan later this year. It will air on Arab Sat and Nile Sat, allowing the channel to reach Muslim communities in Europe to Iran to Southeast Asia, as well as English-speaking non-Muslim audiences who will see "an honorable and positive portrayal of Islam." The channel will feature cartoons for children, Islamic soap operas, lectures and call-in shows. All will carry a message of tolerance and moderation that are the hallmarks of Al Azhar University, which has endorsed the channel. All of the channels presenters and experts are required to hold degrees from Al Azhar.

Azhar is entering a crowded religious television market in the Arab and Muslim world. However, Azhar's emphasis on moderate Islam and its focus on guiding practicing Muslims rather than proselytizing sets it apart from the more bombastic salvos of its competitors.

The new channel is seen by its founders as the beginning of a full-on multimedia strategy to promote its messages--including newspapers, radio, mobile telephone and Internet--in order to attract and grow up with its youthful audience. According to the head of the Channel's Board of Directors, Sheikh Khaled Al-Guindy, the renowned Azhar scholar and member of the Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs, "The moral authority of Al Azhar is our bedrock. We can expand the mediums through which it is communicated to reflect the changes in media and the demands of our youthful audience."

According to Al Guindy, the idea for the channel grew from his earlier efforts to clarify Islam for Muslims confused by conflicting religious edicts. Demand for his first effort, a first-of-its-kind, 24 hour telephone hotline, led to a website and now to satellite television. "Islam is the most peaceful and forgiving faith. Self-appointed sheikhs have stolen this tradition of tolerance and turned it into an instrument of division. This channel is our effort to take Islam back."

The channel is supported by a group of philanthropists and supporters of Al-Azhari. The Azhari has an initial start up budget of 15 million Egyptian pounds, which is expected to increase through private donations. The Channel plans to become financially self sustaining in years ahead, mainly through advertising revenue. Seed funding was provided by **Hassan Tatanaki**, a Libyan

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businessman and philanthropist who supports the channel's mission.

"Reconciling Islam with its peaceful roots is the central challenge facing Muslim youth in the world today," said Mr. Tatanaki. "If we cannot resolve it, neither progress nor peace are possible."

At launch, the channel will broadcast in English and Arabic to start, but will expand to include Hindi and Turkish.

The channel's start-up staff includes 20 technical personnel and 15 Al Azhar experts.

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